(b) if so, whether Government have taken up the issue with Government of Nepal;

(c) if so, the response of the Nepal Government;

(d) whether steps taken by them were satisfactory; and

(e) the steps that have been taken by our Embassy to address the concerns of Indian business persons and professionals?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes.

(b) to (e) Cases involving the safety and security of Indians in Nepal, including Indian business and joint ventures have been taken up by the Government of India with the Government of Nepal, including at the highest levels. The Government of Nepal has been requested to investigate these cases and provide adequate security and safety to all Indians, whose welfare and security is of prime concern to the Government of India. Government of Nepal has assured us of their full cooperation and has promised to take necessary action to address our concerns.

Indo-Russian working group on terrorism

2450. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA
SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Russia have called for concerted efforts by the international community to overcome threats posed by terrorists and urged Government worldwide to deny "safe heaven" to terrorists anywhere in their territories;

(b) whether both countries have also agreed that energy security is a vital component of national and international counter-terrorism strategies and have accordingly decided to exchange experiences to counter the emerging threat to oil and gas installations from terrorists; and

(c) if so, other steps both India and Russia have agreed after meeting of the Indo-Russian Joint working group on combating international terrorism held recently?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) India and Russia have a shared concern on terrorism. Both sides, in the last meeting of the Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism, held in New Delhi, on 24 October, 2006, emphasized the importance of action by all States to deny safe haven to terrorists.

(b) Both sides also agreed that ensuring the security of oil and gas installations was an important component of counter-terrorism strategies. During the 24 October, 2006 meeting of the Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism, it was decided to exchange information on how best to meet the threat to oil and gas installations.

(c) The agreed steps to combat international terrorism included:

(i) Information Sharing;
(ii) Capacity Building;
(iii) Inter-Agency Cooperation.

Rail link between India and Pakistan

2451. SHRI DATTA MEGHE:
SHRI SANJAY RAUT:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of India and Pakistan had decided in principle to introduce freight services in Munabao-Khokhrapar rail sector and increase the frequency of freight trains between Wagha and Attari to facilitate cross-border movement of goods; and

(b) if so, the details thereof by indicating Governments' observations on security angle and risk involve for the establishment of rail link between Indo-Pak border?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Pakistan has not agreed to India's proposal on opening Munabao-Khokrapar rail sector for trade. A rail link across Attari-Wagah is already in operation between the two countries. On an average, about 10-12 freight trains run between the two countries in a month. India has proposed an increase in frequency of goods trains but Pakistan has not yet accepted the proposal. All necessary security precautions are taken by Government in the trade of goods by train.